CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND NINETY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 7 March 1989, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Chusei Yamada (Japan)

GE.89-60376/0354B

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 492nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

First of all, I should like to inform the members of the Conference that at today's plenary meeting we have among us the participants in the Conference on "The United Nations Role in Disarmament and the Peaceful Settlement of Conflicts - From a Women's Perspective" who are following our discussions in the public gallery. The representatives of women from all over the world are gathering here in the Palais. Their conference is being held on the occasion of International Women's Day, which is to be celebrated tomorrow. On behalf of the Conference, I thank them for their interest in the work of our Conference and extend to them our cordial welcome. They have addressed a message to the Conference. As we have done previously, I should like to invite the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to read out the message for the information of the members and for the Conference's record.

Mr. KOMATINA (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): The message addressed to the Conference on Disarmament read as follows:

"We have gathered once again in Geneva to mark International Women's Day, and take the opportunity to wish the Conference members all success in their work during the 1989 session.

"As organizations, we work to promote women's involvement in disarmament and to ensure that women have a meaningful role in determining the future of humanity. Through the efforts of all peoples and Governments world-wide, we hope to see rapid advancement toward achieving disarmament.

"We believe that the current international climate provides historic opportunities for the resolution of international problems, and we also welcome the developments that have taken place during the past months. Amongst them are the conclusion of the INF agreement, the Final Declaration of the Paris Conference on the prohibition of chemical weapons and the concluding document of the Vienna follow-up meeting in the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

"The participants in the Paris Conference stressed the urgency of concluding a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons. Although some obstacles still remain, we urge all the participating States to do their utmost to expedite the negotiations. We would like to see a convention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and their destruction before the end of this year.

"The Brundtland Commission Report on environment and development highlights the imperative need to reallocate global resources for the preservation of the environment and to fulfil the basic human needs of peoples throughout the world. While 30 children die of hunger every

(Mr. Komatina, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

minute, $1.8 million is spent on global military expenditures. We believe that global priorities must be altered and resources must be applied for the betterment of humankind.

"The lasting significance of arms control and disarmament agreements depends upon our ability to bring an end to the arms race. New quantitative and qualitative enhancements to current weapons arsenals can render the achievements of existing agreements obsolete.

"It is for this reason that we continue to place the highest priority upon the negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty as an important step towards significant and enduring disarmament measures. We urge the Conference on Disarmament to pursue a CTBT as a matter of the highest priority, and to establish an ad hoc committee to this end at the earliest possible date.

"We will continue to follow the work of the Conference on Disarmament with deep interest, and assure you of our support for all genuine disarmament efforts."

This ends the message.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Secretary-General of the Conference for reading out the message addressed to us by the non-governmental representatives taking part in the Conference on "The United Nations Role in Disarmament and the Peaceful Settlement of Conflicts - From a Women's Perspective". On behalf of the Conference, I thank the participants in that conference for transmitting to us their valuable views on the important matters of disarmament, and extend to them our very best wishes for the success of their conference.

In conformity with its programme of work, the Conference starts today its consideration of agenda item 5, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". However, in accordance with rule 30 of its rules of procedure, any member wishing to do so may raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference. I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Canada, Peru and Australia. I now call upon the representative of Canada, Ambassador Marchand.

Mr. MARCHAND (Canada) (translated from French): It is an honour for me and for my country to take the floor this morning in the presence of the women whom you greeted at the beginning of the meeting. If you will allow me, I should like to associate myself with your words in wishing these women all the success they deserve during their conference here, and I wish also to pay tribute to this presence, renewed from one year to the next, the dynamism of the action of these women and also their serious-mindedness. Allow me also to adopt the approach of brevity urged on us by our former colleague Ambassador Butler of Australia in welcoming all our newly arrived colleagues in this Conference.

(Mr. Marchand, Canada)

In my initial plenary statement of the current session, I would like to begin by stressing that Canada shares the generally hopeful assessment, already expressed by most preceding speakers, that our session is being held at a particularly propitious time, when new, encouraging prospects appear to be opening up in international relations, including in the disarmament field. I would begin by recalling the generally positive atmosphere that attached to SSOD-III, even though it ended without agreement on a substantive document. This positive atmosphere was even more perceptible during the forty-third United Nations General Assembly, in the First Committee, which Canada had the honour to chair. When the representative of the USSR addressed the final meeting of the First Committee on 30 November on behalf of the Group of Socialist States, I suspect he spoke for us all when he noted that, as never in the past, the Committee's work had been promoted by a positive international political climate. The number of resolutions and decisions adopted increased over the forty-second General Assembly, and so also did the number of consensus resolutions. The other major development was, of course, the January Paris Conference on the 1925 Geneva Protocol, the Final Declaration of which was officially presented to us on 7 February by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Roland Dumas. Most importantly, there was the successful conclusion last month of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting of the CSCE. This included the major decision to open two new negotiations relating to conventional armed forces in Europe. Little wonder that we should therefore be beginning our work for this session with heightened expectations of further progress.

That being noted, however, we should not allow too great a sense of euphoria to blind us to the very difficult outstanding issues that still confront us in relation to each of the eight substantive items on our agenda. When I first spoke in plenary, last year, on 10 March, I emphasized the fundamental importance attached by Canada to an element that must characterize both the bilateral process and our multilateral work, namely effective verification achieved through efficient, agreed implementation mechanisms. I further suggested that, to maintain confidence in compliance, precise and often intrusive verification provisions are a necessary and central element of politically viable arms control and disarmament agreements. The Canadian Government is still of that view, a view which I hope all of us share. If this is so, then all of us must also agree that, particularly in the context of our ongoing work on a chemical weapons convention, we must give intensified effort to resolving outstanding issues to formulate verification measures which will be both practical and effective.

In a few moments' time I shall speak in greater detail about some of our specific concerns relating to chemical weapons, outer space and a nuclear test-ban treaty; but before doing so I would like to support our colleagues Ambassador von Stülpnagel of the Federal Republic of Germany and Ambassador de Rivero of Peru, who on 16 and 28 February last invited us to consider focusing our work somewhat more on those aspects of it where lie the best chances of making genuine progress. I realize, of course, that each of the items on our programme of work has its own intrinsic value. Moreover, there is none among those items that does not find particular support among at least some of the countries which participate in our work. Nevertheless,

(Mr. Marchand, Canada)

because of their subject-matter, in some cases, or because of the views about them held by some countries in other cases, not all are equally amenable to productive negotiation at this stage. Perhaps we should therefore spend more of our collective time and efforts, both of which are clearly finite and are already stretched almost to breaking-point, on areas such as a chemical weapons convention, where we are slowly but surely progressing and where virtually all sovereign States have specifically requested us to redouble our efforts. For these same reasons, I also share Ambassador von Stülpnagel's reservations about any possible expansion in the number of items with which we are seized. No doubt there are other subjects of importance to which the Conference on Disarmament could give attention: but not, I would suggest, until we have been successful in disposing of at least some of those already on our plates.

(continued in English)

Now I would like to address in more detail three among our agenda items which are of particular concern to Canada: items 1, 4 and 5. I shall speak only briefly about item 1, a nuclear test ban. It is a subject where the views of all among us have already been clearly stated; moreover it is one where responsibility for real movement forward lies utlimately with the nuclear-weapon States. It is they who must be persuaded that a régime providing for a comprehensive ban on testing can be in their own national security interest. They also must have a key role in determining the possibilities for devising verification measures in which we all can have real confidence. To this end, it is important that the bilateral dialogue and joint experimentation on nuclear test verification between the United States and the USSR continue and that it make progress toward further agreed test limitations. In the meantime, other States which strongly favour a comprehensive test ban, such as Canada, must do what they can to advance this process.

One area in which we have considered for many years that we could make a national contribution of genuine worth has been the area of verification. This commitment was re-emphasized by the Government of Canada in December of 1986 when, in response to one of the recommendations in an earlier joint Canadian House of Commons and Senate committee report supporting the need for adequate means of verification as a way of pursuing arms control, the Government confirmed that "through the work of the Verification Research Unit" of the Department of External Affairs it would be "advancing practical suggestions for verfication procedures". Many of you will already have seen some of the numerous papers and research documents in various fields that we have already produced and circulated to you.

Of particular relevance to our work in relation to agenda item 1 was our participation in the international seismic data exchange experiment that was conducted late in 1984. We followed that up with a workshop on the exchange of seismic wave-form data held in Ottawa in October 1986. Since then we have been devoting part of our resources, along with other Canadian governmental agencies, to upgrading and modernizing the Yellowknife Seismic Array, an internationally recognized facility which, when that modernization programme

(Mr. Marchand, Canada)

is completed later this year, will constitute a world-class facility which we hope will serve as a prototype for other international stations to be developed to participate in an international seismic data network.

In one of my plenary statements last year, in which I also referred to the Yellowknife Seismic Array, I mentioned that in the autumn of this year Canada would be hosting a technical workshop in Yellowknife. Members of the Group of Scientific Experts will be invited to the official opening of the Array at that time. The occasion will include reporting on and discussion of Canadian research on nuclear test ban verification, as well as informal discussions of preparations for the forthcoming large-scale data exchange experiment which is being co-ordinated by the Canadian representative to the Group of Scientific Experts. In fact the Canadian representative will be extending the invitation to participants at its present meeting, which started yesterday and runs until 17 March.

Before leaving the subject of a comprehensive test ban I would be remiss not to say something, also, about the proposal to convene an amending conference of the partial test-ban Treaty, with the objective of somehow finding agreement to convert it into a comprehensive test ban. Clearly such a conference could be convened (I understand that at least 34 among the required 38 requests have already been received by the depositaries). But to what avail? It is evident that amendment of the partial test-ban Treaty as proposed will not obtain the assent of all three of the nuclear States who are original parties to the Treaty, as required for any amendment to come to effect. Moreover, not all among the present nuclear Powers are parties to the Treaty. For this and other reasons, including difficult issues such as comprehensive test ban verification which remain to be resolved, we in Canada therefore see little benefit in such an exercise. Further, we remain convinced that direct negotiations constitute the only practical means of achieving a comprehensive, genuinely verifiable test ban. We at the Conference on Disarmament might make our best contribution by reaching agreement on a mandate for establishing an ad hoc committee. There are practical things we could be doing, and Canada would welcome our beginning to work in this area on the basis of the suggested mandate in CD/863 of 23 August 1988, as proposed by our former colleague, Czechoslovak Ambassador Vejvoda.

Now let me turn to our agenda item 5, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. It seems to us that in our consideration of item 5 we are perhaps too often overly selective in our focus. Given the importance of the use of space for the present and future development of mankind, it is clearly of particular importance for us to give serious thought to one very broad and somewhat imprecise issue - namely, the relationship between international security, on the one hand, and the uses of space, on the other. Both of the two elements that comprise this relationship deserve greater conceptual thought, as does the relationship itself.

International security in this context relates not only to the absence of weapons as such in outer space. The responsibility of the two major space Powers, both to themselves and to the rest of us, is to maintain a stable

(Mr. Marchand, Canada)

controlled relationship between themselves. We, in the multilateral area, must not forget this point. That is why this delegation has emphasized both that we must take great care to ensure that the results of our work will enhance stability, rather than detract from it, and that our negotiations complement the bilateral negotiations that are taking place between the two major space powers.

We must also consider the actual use being made of outer space. Until recently, space activities have been effectively dominated by the two major space Powers. They have allocated huge resources and developed revolutionary technologies with the goal of managing their strategic relationship to which I have just referred. That situation is, however, now changing every day. One of the specific challenges for the multilateral disarmament world will be not only to put technological developments in space to good use but, even more important, to come to a common understanding as to what such "good use" is.

The point of the foregoing is to underline our contention that the Ad hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space should give much more attention to the basic framework involved in the use of space: to strengthen the current régime, to agree on the definition of key terms, to clarify the issue of stability and, in general, thereby to set up a solid foundation to guide our work in the coming years. I would further contend that this is one area where multilateral efforts would be particularly appropriate.

This exhortation, that we seek better to set out the essential parameters of our work in this field, is not to say that the Ad hoc Committee (once it is established) should not also focus on particular questions. In that regard, we in Canada continue to believe, with respect to the registration Convention, that it would be a helpful confidence-building measure were the parties to provide more timely and specific information concerning the functions of the satellites they launch, including whether specific satellites are intended to fulfil civilian, military or combined functions.

As a member of the Conference on Disarmament with a special interest in progress in this field, and as, moreover, this year's co-ordinator for the Western Group, we in the Canadian delegation had hoped that the ad hoc committee on item 5 could have been established this time with a minimum of procedural wrangling. This has not proved to be so, but my delegation regards the attention being given to this item as a hopeful indication of our shared desire to look seriously at what is involved in the prevention of an arms race in outer space and, through our collective work, make some gains in pursuit of that objective.

Before I leave this item, I would like to inform the Conference that our Verification Research Unit has already completed the preparation of a single-volume outer space compendium covering all the statements made during the course of our 1988 sessions and including all the working papers that were issued. This document, which we hope will prove a useful working tool and point of reference for our future use, was distributed by the secretariat on 28 February under cover of CD/891 dated 22 February.

(Mr. Marchand, Canada)

Finally, let me turn to the fourth subject on our agenda, chemical weapons. Here too we have papers to distribute, which we hope will also prove useful to you. One is the first issue in a new series which we will be preparing of arms control verification occasional papers. It is entitled "International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards: Observations on lessons for verifying a chemical weapons convention". Others among these occasional papers will be issued periodically. They are primarily intended for a specialist audience, and they represent the results of selected independent research undertaken by our Verification Research Programme. For this reason the views expressed in them are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Canadian Government. The second set of papers we have to distribute is a three-volume compendium on chemical weapons covering our 1988 session. The volumes cover plenary statements (PVs), plenary working papers (WPs) and Ad hoc Committee papers (CD/CW/WPs). I would draw to your attention that several Ad hoc Committee papers which were tabled after the close of the 1988 formal session in September 1988 are not included in the third volume. We hope to receive these volumes from Canada any day now and will distribute them to you soon afterwards.

This leads me to the more substantive remarks on our work on chemical weapons with which I would like to conclude this statement. Essentially they comprise a reiteration of some of our long-standing concerns about difficult aspects of our work that nevertheless must be resolved if ever we are to succeed. As I have already stated, probably the single most important task before us, without which we can never hope to find broad support for any convention, is to establish an agreed and effective verification framework. In the words of the Paris Conference Final Declaration, the convention must be "global and comprehensive and effectively verifiable". In our view, to be effective, the verification régime must be practical. It must use resources efficiently and at a tolerable cost. In this context you may recall that on 31 March last year Canada circulated CD/823, a working paper which examined factors involved in determining verification inspectorate personnel and resource requirements. We are at present working on a follow-up paper, examining the cost implications of establishing inspectorate, which we hope to be able to provide to you later this year. Again, our purpose is to advance the process of discussing this crucial aspect of our work on verification in the chemical weapons convention context.

If we are to make further progress, it will be important for us to come to grips with those important problems which still lie ahead that have a political as well as technical dimension. One is challenge inspections: here, notwithstanding what appears to be a general acceptance, at least in principle, of this concept, a number of States still seem to have difficulties in accepting the degree of intrusion which will be needed to make challenge inspection an effective verification measure. Another thorny issue is that of the composition of and the powers to be assigned to the proposed Executive Council. Here we will have to reach agreement among a number of hard choices about the degree of authority this organ will require in order to supervise implementation of the convention and how to hold it accountable for its action. How to select its members has also still to be settled. There remain still other problems. Articles X and XI are particularly sensitive: but

(Mr. Marchand, Canada)

solutions that fully respect the concerns of the various participants in the negotiations on them ought to be available: it will be a matter of making the necessary choices, keeping in mind that our overall objective is an effective convention. On undiminished security during the transition period, the problem is different: we do not yet have sufficiently clear ideas of what the concerns of some among us about this matter really are. But, if we can resolve related outstanding issues respecting the principles and order of destruction, surely some of those concerns will be alleviated. Another, different but still difficult, issue is that of confidentiality. It is of especial interest for countries with highly developed chemical industries operating in a highly competitive international environment, and whose legitimate commercial concerns must be taken into account.

There are other aspects of our work on a chemical weapons convention which can best be dealt with by experts. Perhaps the most important issues in this sense relate to definitions and criteria under article II and to the content and number of the schedules to be required under article VI. Among those inputs required from legal experts there are two of particular concern to Canada. One is the need for us to consider the meaning of the phrase "jurisdiction and control", a phrase that gives rise to issues of extra-territoriality. Canada would prefer that this phrase be deleted from the text and that more specific wording could be found to describe a signatory's obligations. Another relates to article XII, where for now I will merely recall the Canadian suggestion, made last August, that this separate article may not in fact be required.

Another important point I wish to register relates to suggestions which have been made, here and at the Paris Conference, to the effect that conclusion of a convention on chemical weapons should be conditional on progress in nuclear arms control. The Canadian Government emphatically disagrees. A complete ban on chemical weapons is desirable in itself. It is, in the Canadian view, in the interest of countries of all regions. It should not be conditional on progress in other areas.

My list of outstanding "difficult" issues is by no means exhaustive. Nor is it intended in any way to downplay the importance of others which I have not cited. My purpose has been, rather, to remind us that more than mere good will and the intention to work harder will be required from us if we are to make the sort of progress at this session which both the General Assembly and the Paris Conference have called for.

In concluding, I am pleased to be able to tell this Conference that Canada will be joining those member States that have already carried out or plan to carry out trial inspections. We will provide the results as soon as they become available.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Marchand of Canada for his statement. The next speaker is the representative of Peru, Ambassador de Rivero.

Mr. de RIVERO (Peru) (translated from Spanish): May I say, Mr. President, how pleased my delegation feels to see you presiding over the Conference on Disarmament this month? You are a distinguished representative of a great nation that has historical links with my country. I have no doubt you will make a valuable contribution to guiding our work, and I should also like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation to the distinguished Ambassador of Italy, Mr. Aldo Pugliese, for the excellent work he did in the same post last month.

As representatives of various women's non-governmental organizations in favour of the role of women for peace in this present-day world are present in this room, I should also like to greet them and congratulate them on their work. I should also like to take advantage of the fact that I have the floor and that tomorrow is International Women's Day, which should not be interpreted to mean that my wife will not let me speak tomorrow, but that tomorrow there is no plenary, to congratulate all the ladies members of our delegations, the ladies members of the secretariat, of the services, the ladies present here.

I should like this time to refer to agenda item 1, relating to the total cessation of nuclear tests. As I said on another occasion, the paralysis of the Conference in this respect is, regrettably, striking proof of its limitations in providing an appropriate response to the imperative that stems from the world-wide clamour to ban all nuclear tests once and for all. For over 25 years this sole multilateral negotiating forum has shown a certain inability to arrive at a consensus formula which will allow discussion with a view to the holding of multilateral negotiations on a treaty prohibiting this. I am not going to recapitulate the most important episodes in this unconsummated tale. However, it is proper to recall that the bilateral negotiations that have been conducted since 1977 by the States depositaries of the partial test-ban Treaty have certainly opened up an unprecedented possibility to chart the correct course, which has regrettably not been realized as a result of disagreements concerning the priority to be given to this issue within the process of nuclear disarmament.

It was this realization of the lack of political will and the paralysis of the Conference on Disarmament that in 1985 prompted Indonesia, Mexico, Peru, Sri Lanka and Yugoslavia to place before the United Nations General Assembly a draft resolution which recommended that the contracting parties to the 1963 Treaty should carry out urgent consultations as to the advisability of convening a conference to amend this multilateral instrument by extending the test ban to underground areas, thus making it absolute and total. Three years later and in view of the continued stagnation in the Conference on Disarmament, despite the favourable reaction of the majority of its members to the draft mandate submitted by the Group of 21 (CD/829), these same five States, in the welcome company of Venezuela, were compelled on 5 August last year to submit to the States depositaries of the 1963 Treaty a request for the convening of such a conference, together with a specific proposal which appears in document CD/852.

(Mr. de Rivero, Peru)

As the distinguished Ambassador of Mexico pointed out in his statement on 8 February last, the amendment proposal originally formulated by these six States has been widely welcomed, to the point where it now has around 33 co-sponsors, which shows how much a measure of this type is desired. In other words, we are very close to the threshold of 39 contracting parties required to set in motion the procedure described in article II of that international instrument, which permits the initiation of negotiations proper.

A new avenue has been opened since 1985 and is being consolidated in 1988. It would be impossible to understand or explain if the Conference on Disarmament had already shouldered its responsibilities with regard to item 1 of its agenda, the first item. Unfortunately it has not done so, and now we see this sole multilateral negotiating forum facing the imminent risk of letting the urgent question of the total cessation of nuclear tests elude its grasp. But what is important is not the means but the end.

Last year we celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This is far and away the international instrument that has the greatest number of parties. There are about 140 States parties, Peru being one of the 58 countries that signed it at the very moment it was opened for signature, on 1 July, and the 28th to become a contracting party, even before two of the three depositary States. With these credentials in hand, in addition to the status as a contracting party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco from 4 March 1969, I think it is proper for me to make some comments on this today. Firstly, my delegation reaffirms my country's support for that international instrument, and stresses its importance for the maintenance of international peace and security. Like any human endeavour the NPT is not a perfect multilateral instrument. However, it is an important landmark in collective multilateral efforts to curb horizontal nuclear proliferation and reverse vertical proliferation. From the standpoint of history as it might have been, the treaty might perhaps have been better, especially as regards the provisions of article VI, concerning the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament. But this was not the case, and what we need to do now is to strengthen it, seeking full compliance with all the obligations entered into by the parties.

Secondly, while the NPT has to date not achieved the universality initially sought, it is none the less true that it has provided a bulwark against the temptation of covert horizontal proliferation, which has undeniable repercussions in the regional context. Of course, an additional effort is still required. It is also clear that a very important role is being played here by the trade policies of the supplying countries - this is very important - whose indulgence at a certain point rendered a disservice to the cause of nuclear non-proliferation.

One last comment relates to the limited results that have been obtained both in nuclear co-operation between States parties and in the realization of a fundamental aspiration shared by all - the cessation of nuclear testing once and for all. In respect of article IV, there is a need to give a new impetus to technical and scientific assistance to developing countries which are

(Mr. de Rivero, Peru)

contracting parties to the NPT so that they can reduce their budgets for training of technical personnel, and also make better use of the many benefits of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

As for the question of a nuclear test ban, it might be a happy coincidence for the convening of the conference to amend the 1963 Moscow Treaty to precede the holding of the fourth NPT review conference, which is scheduled for mid-1990. If so, if that happens, my delegation deems it perfectly legitimate to hope that the two ad hoc forums might crystallize converging processes aimed at providing a definitive reply to the universal aspiration for the prohibition of all nuclear testing. Another development of great significance might be the happy conclusion next year of an agreement between the two big Powers providing for substantial reductions in their strategic arsenals in accordance with a timetable and in association with restrictions on the modernization of the remaining nuclear weapons. We are not unaware of the technical and political implications that both objectives involve. However, the possibility of success is inherent in the logic that made feasible the signature and entry into force of the Washington Treaty for the elimination of intermediate-range and shorter-range nuclear missiles.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador de Rivero of Peru for his statement and for the very kind words he addressed to me and to my country. The next speaker is the representative of Australia. I give the floor to Ambassador Reese.

Mr. REESE (Australia): As this is the first time I have taken the floor at this Conference, I would like to thank colleagues who have welcomed me in their statements and assure them that Australia will continue to play the active role in this Conference which Australia played under my predecessor.

I am also pleased, Mr. President, that I make my first statement while you are in the chair, and in the presence of participants in the Conference entitled "The United Nations Role in Disarmament and the Peaceful Settlement of Conflicts - From a Women's Perspective", which is being held on the occasion of International Women's Day to be celebrated tomorrow.

While it is my intention to address particula items on our agenda as the session progresses, I have asked for the floor tod to bring to the attention of the Conference on Disarmament an important arms control initiative of the Australian Government.

The Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Senator Gareth Evans, announced today, 7 March, that Australia will host a major international chemical weapons conference later this year. The conference will bring together Governments and representatives of the international chemical industry to discuss the growing problem of the international trade in feedstocks, plant and equipment which are to be used for chemical weapons purposes. The initiative follows discussions between Australian and United States officials, and between Senator Evans and the United States Secretary of State, Mr. James Baker, about how best to build on

(Mr. Reese, Australia)

the momentum generated by the Paris Conference on chemical weapons in January. The date of the conference, and details relating to participation in it, are still to be finalized.

In his announcement Senator Evans said that for some time Australia had been actively developing measures to address the problem of the spread of chemical weapons. Since 1985, Australia had brought together representatives of industrial nations which export certain relevant chemicals, to ensure that their industries were not associated, even inadvertently, with the production of chemical weapons. This group, which met regularly in Paris, has now become known as the Australia Group.

Australia has had a productive dialogue with other Governments and the chemical industry for some time, including as leader of the Australia Group, on how best to advance the objective of preventing the spread of chemical weapons while not impeding the legitimate activities of the civil chemical industry. One clear lesson from these discussions has been the need to work closely with the chemical industry. Senator Evans said that the proposed conference - designed to bring together Governments and chemical industry representatives in a joint problem-solving dialogue - would benefit from the background of close relations which have developed between the Australian chemical industry and the Australian Government. Australia sees the purposes of the Conference as being supportive of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament for a comprehensive and universal ban on chemical weapons. The chemical weapons convention remains Australia's priority objective.

I will ask the secretariat that the full text of Senator Evans' statement be circulated as a document of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Reese of Australia for his statement and for the very kind words he addressed to me. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other member wish to take the floor at this stage? I recognize the representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador van Schaik.

Mr. van SCHAIK (Netherlands): The reason that I wish to say a few words is that today we are honoured with the presence of special guests. Many of them have come a long way. You yourself have mentioned in particular the presence of representatives to the Conference on "The United Nations Role in Disarmament and the Peaceful Settlement of Conflicts - From a Women's Perspective."

Let me say how much my delegation appreciates the fact that non-governmental delegations, as well as private citizens - women and men - pay attention to our work. The interest they express today will one day transform itself into opinions and advice. Without the people's advice, we run the risk of becoming mandarins, whose wisdom may have too little to do with the outside world. And, speaking for a moment only of our female

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

visitors, I recall the words of one of the first suffragettes, Emmeline Pankhurst, who in 1908, speaking from a dock in London, said: "We are here not because we are law-breakers; we are here in our efforts to become lawmakers". Mr. President, let it be so.

We here in this august hall are sitting far away from those who observe us from above. That is quite a difference with the setting a few hundred yards from here, where, in the human rights Commission, it is difficult for delegates not to stumble over the body of a representative of a non-governmental organization or a journalist of some sort. Styles differ, and each has its merits. But wherever they may be, on the upper gallery, in the lobby or on the floor, my delegation wishes to assure those who follow our debate that, outside of this room, my delegation is always ready for substantive discussion of themes that bring us here together.

Forgive me for this brief excursion into an area that is not normally the subject of our discussions. Our relations with the outside world are perhaps an under-exposed subject that requires a more serious debate, but today I wanted to limit myself to these words of welcome to the audience above us. I hope soon to make a somewhat more substantive contribution to our debate. Since this is the first time I have taken the floor this month, I wish to say how much my delegation appreciates seeing you in the Chair. Japan is a country whose deep interest in, and involvement with, matters of disarmament we admire. Your own dedication and personal interest, supported by a lucid mind, give us great confidence in your leadership. I also wish to thank the President for the month of February, Aldo Pugliese, for the excellent way in which he has tacked over the wild waves of the always difficult first month of a year's session.

To conclude, I also wish to welcome colleaques who have arrived since I spoke last. I wish them success in their endeavours, here and elsewhere, and I hope they will enjoy their participation in this Conference as much as I have done and still do.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador van Schaik of the Netherlands for his statement, and for the very kind words he addressed to me and to my country. Does any other member wish to take the floor?

If no other member wishes to take the floor, I should like to inform you that my consultations on the establishment of an ad hoc committee under agenda item 5, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", are proceeding. I will again take up this matter with the co-ordinators at our regular meeting tomorrow, in order to establish whether we have consensus on this matter. If this is so, then I intend to put before the Conference, for decision, a draft mandate for the re-establishment of the Ad hoc Committee and, at the same time, we shall take up requests from non-members to participate in the work of the Ad hoc Committee.

Distinguished delegates, you are aware that our meetings schedule is quite congested. In order to accommodate the increased requirements for meetings, in particular those of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, we

(The President)

must make the best use of the conference services made available to us. Short plenaries should be followed by meetings of the subsidiary bodies. In order to programme those meetings in an organized manner, we need to know the length of the plenary meetings in advance. I would therefore like to request you to register your names not later than midday Wednesday when you plan to address the plenary in the following week - that is to say, please register by noon tomorrow if you wish to speak in the plenary either on Tuesday or Thursday next week. This is by no means intended to set a deadline; each delegation has the right to request the floor at the last minute - I simply ask for your understanding and co-operation so that we can better organize our meetings.

I have no other business for today, and I now intend to adjourn this plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 9 March 1989, at 10.a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.